

Appendix table 7-5.

Feeling informed about selected policy issues: 1979–2001

(Mean index scores)

Issue	1979	1981	1983	1985	1988	1990	1992	1995	1997	1999	2001
Local school issues	44	55	54	54	55	55	55	59	61	58	59
Economic issues and business conditions	42	55	54	48	50	53	56	52	51	50	51
New medical discoveries	—	—	—	53	52	53	51	52	56	53	51
Environmental pollution	—	—	—	—	—	60	57	52	51	48	47
Issues about new scientific discoveries	36	38	40	43	42	42	39	42	48	44	42
Military and defense policy	—	—	46	45	43	51	49	40	39	44	39
The use of new inventions and technologies	35	35	42	39	38	38	38	40	44	43	38
Agricultural and farm issues	33	35	—	41	46	36	—	35	38	33	35
International and foreign policy issues	35	44	40	42	42	51	46	36	36	40	35
Space exploration	—	37	39	42	39	37	33	33	41	37	32
Sample size (number)	1,635	3,195	1,631	2,005	2,041	2,033	2,001	2,006	2,000	1,882	1,574

— = not asked

NOTES: Respondents were read the following statement: “Now, I’d like to go through this list with you again, and for each issue I’d like you to tell me if you are very well informed, moderately well informed, or poorly informed.” Responses were converted to a 0–100 scale by assigning a value of 100 for a “very well informed” response, 50 for “moderately well informed,” and 0 for “poorly informed.” Indices were obtained by adding all the values for each policy issue and computing the average.

SOURCES: National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics (NSF/SRS), NSF Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology, various years.

See figure 7-1 in Volume 1.

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